



House Bill 319

General Provisions – Commemorative Days – Overdose Awareness

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Health and Government Operations
Committee

Date: March 15, 2022

From: D'Paul Nibber and Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 319. This bill would require the Governor to proclaim August 31 as Overdose Awareness Day annually.

On August 31, 2021, Governor Larry Hogan ordered all flags across Maryland at half-staff to commemorate International Overdose Awareness Day. Each year, the day honors the memory of those who passed due to substance use disorders. Unfortunately, in each of the last two years, Maryland has set records for opioid-related overdoses.

Our counties, who operate at the frontlines of the opioid epidemic, have used International Overdose Awareness Day to bring renewed focus to the work that must be done to save lives. For example, Baltimore City coordinates an anti-stigma campaign to coincide with the day. Similarly, in 2021, Harford County spread stories of recovery, treatment resources, and recovery events over social media. Howard County provided training on how to administer naloxone, a life-saving medication capable of reversing opioid overdoses.

Altogether, HB 319 is needed to shed light on those who have, and those who continue to suffer from, substance use disorders, and renew Maryland's commitment to overcoming the opioid epidemic. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS** HB 319 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.